

KINSHIP

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responsible for the children, especially during their early years, but they are frequently sent 'to the *oluina*', i.e. to the mother's brother for at least a part of their education. Herein has arisen a conflict between the claims of the paternal household and the maternal kinship group. Economic and other forces seem to have favoured the former so that 'During these days in which we stand, things have changed somewhat so that as between children and their parents, they work for their fathers for they say, "A child is strong with his *oluse* and less so with his *oluina*." Nowadays a man teaches a child work and also looks out for his education that he may advance properly. His mother's brothers (*va inamu*) have no longer much power as of old.'⁶¹³ 178 [578]

Bearing in mind their bilateral nature and the fact that every Ocimbundu belongs at the same time to his paternal (*oluse*) and to his maternal (*oluina*) groups, the functions of these kinship groups may be summarized as follows:

*Oluse**Oluina*613
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SOCIAL

Consists of local residence units; succession of village and tribal offices from father to son, or elder to younger brother.

Marriage allowed between cross-cousins and other relatives of non-parallel descent; couple lives at groom's father's village.

Extended family organization; office of family head descends from mother's brother to sister's son; children belong.

Marriage preferred between cross-cousins and other relatives of non-parallel descent; children belong to mother's *oluina*. [582]

EDUCATIONAL

Responsibility for education of young children, especially in social usage.

Responsibility sometimes assumed in later childhood, especially for technical phases. [571]

ECONOMIC

Ownership and inheritance of land. (Passed from father to son or elder to younger brother.)

Ownership and inheritance of more largely negotiable and movable property, as e.g. trade goods, cattle, &c. (passed from mother's brother to sister's son). [423] [422]

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internally disruptive forces is sorcery. It is apparently on the increase among the Ovimbundu, a tendency which has also been reported from other parts of Africa.¹ The extent to which sorcery operates within the kinship groups themselves makes its influence even more dangerous to social cohesion.

Any marked success achieved by an individual, especially when such success has been achieved by an individual alone or in partnership, but not in co-operation with a number of persons, often brings on suspicion of sorcery.² Should the results of such success be distributed widely and freely within the family or kinship group, suspicion of sorcery is less likely to arise and open accusation may be avoided. Grudges, however, whether newly built up or inherited, often find expression in suspicion or in open accusation of sorcery.³ An open accusation of sorcery (*oku sunga owanga*) is a very serious matter and will not often be made lightly.

Such accusations are made both within and across kinship lines. Affinal relatives are quite often accused of sorcery, and suspicion frequently rests upon wives whose kinship connexions are in distant regions. Predilection for and skill in the use of sorcery is supposed to be inherited. A reputation for sorcery may be imputed to a family through a number of generations.

Somewhat less overt accusations of sorcery are made at the inquest during a funeral. The corpse in its coffin slung to a pole between two carriers responds to questions as to who 'ate him' by forward (affirmative), or backward (negative) movements. It may also cause its carriers to stop in front of a certain house during the procession through the village, meaning that one of the occupants of the house is thereby accused of having caused the death. Traditionally such accusations during inquests were exceedingly common, perhaps even usually expected.⁴ Should the corpse not give a clear answer, then subsequent divination would often bring out an accusation of sorcery. Accusations such as these, involving responsibility for the death of a person, are usually made within the body of blood or affinal kin.

When sorcery is consciously taken up and employed, the purpose is usually economic advancement, but it often involves overt

¹ Cf. B. Malinowski, in *Africa*, 1939, p. 39.

² *Vide infra*, pp. 107 ff.

³ *Vide infra*, p. 125.

⁴ For an early observation of this (c. 1790) *vide Annaes Mar. e Col.*, 3a Ser., p. 489 f.

556 The attitude toward success in agriculture indicated by the
 ● 578 foregoing is held in some measure toward marked success in other
 472 professions, but in lesser degree, except perhaps where trading is
 taken up individually or by two persons in partnership. One of the
 earliest observers, Pinheiro de Lacerda (c. 1790), noted that
 accusations of witchcraft were most often levelled at the wealthier
 members of the community.¹ This fear of success has continued
 down to the present day, but while trading was an open group
 enterprise in which many individuals acquired wealth, success in
 that field came to be accepted more quickly than in the more
 individualistic work of farming. At the present time, commercial
 activities are carried on largely by individuals alone or in a limited
 partnership, and the practice, or at least the suspicion, of witch-
 craft in connexion with them seems to be on the increase. Some
 may feel that similar attitudes with regard to successful results from
 cultivation of the soil are now held less strongly than formerly, but
 [754] I know of no evidence to support such a feeling. One of the
 commonest traditional patterns for witchcraft is that of a partner-
 ship of a senior and a junior member—of parent and child, or of
 mother's brother and sister's son. That is one reason why urgent
 suggestions by an older person concerning choice of a profession
 by a younger are looked upon with disfavour among the Ovi-
 mbundu.

868 A child should be taught enough diligence and application in
 562 cultivating that he or she may not lack the necessities in later adult
 life. Every boy will take to trading and bargaining almost as
 naturally as eating, drinking, breathing, and sleeping. Commerce
 still retains so much of its former glamour that every boy will take
 it up if and when opportunity offers. The care of younger children
 comes even more naturally to the girl, and she must also learn the
 housekeeper's art. Many folk-tales and songs indicate a reluc-
 tance on the part of girls to dedicate themselves with diligence to
 cultivation. In the days of the rubber trade, when girls could also
 join caravans for the coast and to the interior as porters, there may
 have been some real basis for this, but at the present time girls are
 convinced and enthusiastic cultivators, almost 100 per cent.² The

¹ *Annaes Maritimos e Coloniaes*, 5a Ser., p. 489 f.

² Women coming to live in the coast towns or in other European settlements where they have no fields or gardens find adjustment to life without agricultural labours very difficult.

867 the correct adjustments early, naturally grows into a comparatively well-adjusted life, and so avoids the major conflicts to a much greater degree than is the case in our society. A very large proportion of those in conflict in present-day Umbundu society are de-tribalized or partially de-tribalized individuals, especially those who as children were brought up outside or largely outside the kinship groups. The large proportion of those brought up on the mission stations who are out of adjustment, and often in overt conflict, has been noticed by many observers. The biographies and autobiographies which I have collected witness clearly to the same fact, that most of the ill-adjusted individuals and those in overt conflict were products of an extra-tribal, de-tribalized, or non-traditional situation; while practically all of the well-adjusted persons were educated within the kinship system.

154 The three major conflicts which have been recognized in our society, that is, 'struggle', sex, and 'inferiority',¹ are all present in some form among the Ovimbundu. The adjustments by which they resolve these conflicts are distinctive.

865 Adjustments in anger by which the 'struggle conflict' is resolved are interesting and important educationally. The child is taught when quite young that the expression of anger is taboo.² Tantrums are rare among Ovimbundu children. Anger and ill-will are named by thoughtful Ovimbundu as the chief root-cause of sorcery. The more thoughtful ones also recognize these as an important cause of accusations of sorcery. Expression of anger is traditionally much feared. It is not desired in the character of the king.³ Nowadays [177] there are more who give free vent to expressions of anger, but they are for the most part either individuals who imitate Europeans and who seek to discard Umbundu cultural habits and values; or they are those who are considered sorcerers, either by themselves or others. An Ovimbundu who as a child has learned traditional adjustments in anger will rarely allow his anger to break through the resistance and become 'extroverted' except in recognized outlets. These outlets are somewhat analogous to our own rationalizations of anger.⁴

154 The chief 'introverted' reaction of anger which I have noted

¹ The psychological analysis follows Allport, *op. cit.*, chap. xiv.

² See *supra*, p. 101.

³ See *supra*, p. 21.

⁴ Cf. Allport, *op. cit.*, p. 344. The Ovimbundu have not thought up such a high-sounding term as 'moral indignation' as a euphemism for anger.

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among the Ovimbundu is 'grudge-building'. This is probably fairly common and often eventuates either in sorcery or in suspicion of sorcery. There is special danger of this type of reaction between men and women who have an in-law relation to each other. This is probably a principal reason for the avoidance with which these relations are so carefully hedged and the respectful treatment mutually enjoined.¹ Grudges are sometimes inherited through several generations. According to folk-tales, children sometimes bear grudges against their parents for real or fancied ill-treatment.²

Recognized outlets for anger in frankly 'extroverted' form are found in war and raiding parties, in the hunt, and in lawsuits. War is no longer resorted to but up to the present day anger still finds a recognized expression in actions at law. One of the commonest of such actions is the accusation of sorcery (*oku sunga owanga*) already touched upon above. Church councils and meetings have taken over some functions of the traditional courts of law and this is probably one reason for the decidedly stormy sessions which sometimes occur.

The importance of wit and humour as an outlet for anger has been recognized. 'The ability to turn one's anger into a jest goes with the trait of insight . . . and is sometimes appropriately called "the saving sense of humour".'³ That the Ovimbundu have this ability and use it often and to good advantage is very much in their favour. May not this be one indication of a considerable degree of insight which many observers have noted in the Umbundu character?⁴ I would not claim that the Ovimbundu have made any very remarkable attainments in the social control of anger: their achievements in that direction may be slight when compared to some of the more advanced peoples, as, for example, the Scandinavians, the Hollanders, or the English. What is remarkable, however, is that they have frankly recognized the necessity for such control more clearly than have some supposedly more advanced peoples.

Adjustments in family life are held to be resolutions of what are ultimately sex conflicts.⁵ Marital adjustments are of prime

¹ See *supra*, pp. 57 ff.

² Cf. *Journal of American Folk-Lore Society*, 1922, vol. 35, no. 6, p. 123 f.

³ Allport, *op. cit.*, p. 344.

⁴ Some writers have attributed to negroes a quality of 'insight' superior to that possessed by whites, cf. article 'Insight, &c.' in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Sept. 1938.

⁵ Allport, *op. cit.*, pp. 345-53.

whole supernatural world... The divining basket is the concrete medium through which the spirits reveal their will to their descendants on earth, and warn them of dangers, human or supernatural".⁽¹⁾ 787

SORCERERS AND WITCHES

Sorcerers and witches are not clearly distinguished. Both are called *olungu*, and have powers over one or more malignant spirits whom they can send anywhere to kill, steal, or torment. These "familiar spirits" are sometimes called *otulo ndumba*, and are held responsible for all mysterious disappearances of maize, beans and other possessions, as well as for many illnesses and deaths. Some sorcerers are said to own small images which they send out at night. Others are said to dance naked at night at the door of the intended victim's house. When sorcery involves killing by physical means, portions of the victim's body may be used to make "medicine" or charms.⁽²⁾ 754 776

A person may be a sorcerer without knowing it, and may deny it when accused by the diviner. If he does so, he and his accuser undergo the *ombulungu* (poison test),⁽³⁾ to discover who is in the right.⁽⁴⁾ Concerning accusation of sorcery, Childs writes "Any marked success ... by an individual, especially when such success has been achieved by an individual alone or in partnership, but not in co-operation with a number of persons, often brings on suspicion of sorcery. Should the results of such success be distributed widely....suspicion is less likely to arise....An open accusation of sorcery (*oku sungu owungu*) is a very serious matter and will not often be made lightly. Such accusations are made both within and across kinship lines. Affinal relatives are quite often accused of sorcery, and suspicion frequently rests upon wives whose kinship connections are in distant regions..."⁽⁵⁾ 683 [578]

The tendency or aptitude for sorcery is supposed to be inherited by a daughter, or a son, or a nephew from the mother, uterine or classificatory, from the mother's brother etc. It is said that older relatives take younger ones as apprentices and partners.⁽⁶⁾ The aim of a person who consciously takes up sorcery is said usually to be economic advancement. A very common form involves the enslavement of the spirit of another person, often a child of one's own family or kin group; the victim may be killed by either physical or magical means. Childs points out that sorcery is one of the greatest internally disruptive forces within the kin group and social system of the Ovimbundu. He notes that jealousy and grudges often bring accusations from within the circle of kin, but does not describe what happens when the charges have been made and verified. Especially in view of his statement that economic, political and other forces now seem to be acting to increase the incidence of sorcery,⁽⁷⁾ it would be interesting to have information concerning its possible connection with segmentation of lineages or village groups, or its relation to tensions between the paternal and maternal groups of relatives. 754 [829] 754 578

(1) Tucker, op.cit., p.201.

(2) Childs, personal communication.

(3) The *ombulungu* is administered by the medicine-men, and causes sickness but not death. See Tucker, op.cit., and Hamby, (2) 1954, p.203.

(4) Tucker, op.cit.

(5) Childs, 1949, p.37.

(6) Childs, personal communication.

(7) Childs, 1949, p.58.

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622 that the administration gets labour and money from the vil-
 648 lagers, and largely though not exclusively through them that the
 63Y villagers keep in touch with the post which politically integrates
 them into Angola and legally provides sanctions which they
 do not possess. The government headmen do not supervise on
 behalf of the post the daily life of their fellow-villagers. The
 government laws—such as the prohibition of beer- and rum-
 brewing and grass-burning (for hunts)—which if enforced
 would bring about a certain number of changes in Umbundu
 social life, are not enforced for many reasons—the administra-
 tion makes no real attempt to suppress these uses as opposed to
 [68] levying annual fines¹⁸ per head, the government headmen go in
 for these customs themselves, and they lack the power to
 achieve this enforcement. Were the government to introduce
 policies involving some reorganization of the social life they
 would need a stronger form of local authority. Under the
 present circumstances, however, the powers and status of the
 chief and government headmen are quite consistent with the
 demands made on them by the post.

622 There were four government headmen in Gumba in 1955-6,
 Guilherme, Lupassa, Tjilombo (who became chief after the
 deposition of Lusase), and Walivanga. Guilherme was in 1955
 living in Epalanga. Some people thought he should live in
 Kamupa, which had been founded by his mother's brother
 Lusase—however, when he left Epalanga in 1956 he settled near
 the Protestant village of Kalungwengwe. His change of resi-
 dence had been the result of violent quarrels with Paulo and
 [578] other Epalanga people. Lupassa lived in Katembo, and was a
 sister's son of Kaluywa, who was the traditional headman. I
 do not think Lupassa was the dominating personality in Kat-
 embo. Tjilombo was on the other hand the leading personality
 in Tjiangu, many of its people being related to him. Walivanga
 was similarly linked by kin or affinal ties to the majority of the
 people of Belem.

The foregoing paragraph raises the question of the relation-
 ship of the government headman to the traditional headmen.
 A man who is both a government headman and a traditional
 headman is in a fairly strong position in his village; when the

¹⁸ Each fine is about 10-20 escudos (1/8d.-2/-).

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604 in the hands of the mother's brother, though the father could, if he wished, intervene; and a man could establish a shrine of his own while his father lived.

613 It is not altogether easy to see how the matrilineal group maintained its cohesion. It was not the working team on which the caravan trade operated since a man's father had first claim on his services, and he could travel with other relatives. Within it alone loans need not be repaid and accusations of sorcery were made; with this in mind, it is evident why, as Dr. Hastings tells us, people tended to avoid the company of their matrikin, [578] and why most disputes arose in the matrilineal groups.²² It 613 seems that probably the key to the functioning of the matrilineal groups lies in the details, not now recoverable, of the 437 economy of the caravan trade. As everybody, however successful, was in danger at some time or another of incurring heavy losses,²³ an arrangement by which anybody who was in difficulties could call on his kin for help would be generally acceptable. The association of mutual aid of this sort with matrilineal rather than patrilineal kin would spread losses geographically and would exclude conflicts over currency and movable property from village life. Moreover, the dispersal of the matrilineal kin would provide an individual with business contacts over a considerable area.

5. Contemporary Kinship Norms

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178 Much of this has disappeared. The men's house is no longer the dining-room of the village male population. Men now often eat with their wives and children though attitudes and practice of this vary between households. People in their twenties knew of the existence of these avoidance rules but it seems that the rules forbidding sons to eat with their mother and eldest sons and daughters to eat with their father are now generally ignored.

[692] ²² Hastings, pp. 18, 87. Disputes within the matrilineal group could be, and very often were, referred to the sub-chief and king. The account of legal proceedings in Hastings (pp. 139-51) suggests that a high proportion of the cases heard by the kings were to do with sorcery. In such cases the social extension of the matrilineal group beyond the area of the sub-chiefdom and the wider political integration achieved by the kingdoms 'co-operated' in preserving a range of social relations beyond the sub-chiefdom.

²³ Apropos of losses Childs quotes Magyar as saying that the Ovimbundu traded for excitement rather than gain (p. 204).

CHAPTER IX

SOCIAL CONTROL



1. Introduction

121 In this chapter I shall describe and analyse three disputes
626 which reveal the working of social control in present-day
Umbundu society. The first dispute is between an elder of the
school and a government headman, the second is between a
traditional headman and a villager with the intervention of a
local self-styled *assimilado*¹, and the third arose from a quarrel
between an irregularly installed chief and a traditional head-
man.

[178] The points which it is hoped will arise from the analysis of
the material are the disappearance or extreme weakness of the
traditional institutions of social control, the way in which the
Ovimbundu appeal to the members of the 'civilized' community
for decisions or support in cases, and how kinship ties affect the
relations between persons involved in a dispute.

2. Guilherme and Paulo

578 The parties principally involved in the first dispute were Paulo
(24. See List of Epalanga residents), the elder of the school
at Epalanga, and his cross-cousin Guilherme (see List II, p. 55),
a government headman then living in Epalanga, Francisco,
a son of the former chief Mbati and wife's brother to Paulo,
and Sapapula (10), the headman and reputed founder of
Epalanga. The sequence of the dispute is first a quarrel between
Paulo and Guilherme. Guilherme then attacks Paulo through
his wife's brother Francisco. This brings about a general attack

¹ The fact that Justino was not actually an *assimilado* is not relevant, since he
used the belief of the local people that he was.

² [assimilado is an African possessing
Portuguese citizenship -- Anstet]

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by the people under Paulo's leadership on Guilherme's position. 578
Guilherme counter-attacks by using his relationship with the post but finds himself forced to seek a reconciliation with the people of Epalanga.

The quarrel had begun with the proposed marriage of Anna, a step-daughter of Guilherme, and a member of his household, to Luciano, a son of the former chief Simbwyikoka and an inhabitant of the latter's village. Guilherme had no effective religious affiliation but Anna had been baptized as a Catholic, her godmother being Maria, the wife of Paulo. Luciano on the other hand was the elder of the Protestant catechetical school in Simbwyikoka village. Paulo therefore intervened to stop the marriage in accordance with the rule made by the Catholic [582] missions against marriage with non-Catholics. Guilherme, angry at this, decided to pick on Pedro Nendi (see List II, p. 55) and Francisco Lyonjanga, sons of Mbatu, and therefore wife's brothers to Paulo. Pedro Nendi had been at one time a Catholic catechist but had since been dismissed. Francisco was at the time of my arrival in Epalanga moving out of his village to settle near Pedro in a hamlet near the village. He worked as assistant to Abel Pinheiro, an African carpenter, who lived a little further along the road to Chicunda and who was employed by a white living elsewhere. Guilherme accordingly reported to the post that the two brothers had never gone to contract labour and got a policeman to come with an order for [648] them to be brought to the post for contract labour. The policeman arrived and got Francisco, but Pedro was away visiting relatives at Nova Lisboa. Francisco then claimed that he was in fact employed by a white and was therefore exempt from contract labour. At that time Antonio Pires, an African priest from the *Missão Católica de Bimbe*, was visiting Epalanga as part of a tour through the villages. Accordingly, on the morning of the 16th January 1956, Francisco came to my house where the priest had been breakfasting with me, and stated his case. This action brought the dispute between Guilherme and Paulo for the first time within the sphere of a representative of the civilized community. The priest told Francisco to get a letter from his employer to the post. Francisco duly arrived at the post with a letter, but forgot to bring his

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- 578 pass² and was sent to contract labour. The *chefe* apparently informed his employer that he could get other carpenters from the post.

[772]
[648] Paulo, then acting in his official capacity as elder of the school, had intervened in a projected marriage in which Guilherme had received the bridewealth. Guilherme, acting in his official capacity, had attacked Paulo's wife's brothers Francisco and Pedro. The dispute had now been brought within the sphere of the mission (as represented by the priest Antonio Pires) and of the administration which had ordered the recruitment of the two men. The conflict between Guilherme and Paulo was now to widen out to include several other people.

On the 21st January the strain between Guilherme and Paulo showed itself again in violent quarrelling, from which I learnt about the broken engagement of Anna. Paulo said that he would refer the matter to Antonio Pires when the priest came back.

[273] On the morning of the 24th the question was brought before Antonio Pires, the catechist Pedro Chiquete Santos (35), Paulo, and Guilherme all speaking in turn. Then other people raised their grievances. Sapapula declared that Guilherme was the enemy of everybody in the village. A man called Kasosi (7), a sister's son of Wasuka (15), stepped forward to claim that Guilherme had attacked him and injured him. Apparently [273] Guilherme, while having illicit rum in his own house, had beaten up Kasosi for possessing rum. Both Maria, Paulo's wife, and Nahoka, Sapapula's wife, joined in the argument. The only man who seemed in any way favourable to Guilherme was Kapapelo (see List II, p. 55), a mother's brother of his, who was also a 'brother' of Lusase (see List II, p. 55). Antonio Pires came down heavily against Guilherme, at which the latter declared that he owed obedience only to the post and ran off.

Towards the end of the argument Luciano (the former fiancé of Anna) and Jeremias (the Protestant catechist from Simbwyi-koka) came to the priest to ask for the repayment of the bridewealth.

On the 25th Lusase, the chief of Gumba, happened to visit

[648] ² The legal obligation for natives to possess passes is not enforced with the zeal which applies in South Africa.

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Epalanga. Told what had happened, he said that he would keep out of it, and that he had advised Guilherme to live elsewhere. In the afternoon of the same day, as heavy rain was falling, a number of people ran up and bounded on to my veranda. These included Anna, another girl (I think a sister of hers) both rather frightened, Simbwyikoka, Luciano, Paulo and some others. Anna said that Simbwyikoka was a sorcerer³ and would kill her, and sooner than be killed by sorcery she would jump in the river. Simbwyikoka and Luciano had come to Epalanga to try and recover the 250 escudos which had been paid over in bridewealth. The catechist tried to intervene saying 'The catechist is the chief⁴ of everybody in the village', but nobody paid any attention to him. Eventually, as the girl continued to threaten to jump in the river, I contributed 200 escudos, and so those involved left satisfied. 578
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[762]
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Early the following day I heard that Guilherme had returned from the post with two policemen to arrest various people. Those arrested were Sapapula, his cross-cousins Epalata (5), and Wasuka, and the latter's son Kuseka, Kasosi, Paulo, Pedro the catechist, Bartolomeu (32), Paulo's assistant in school matters, and his son Eugenio. Eugenio and Kuseka were arrested for not paying taxes and their fathers were arrested presumably for their supposed responsibility. Epalata was arrested for a similar alleged offence on the part of one of his sons, who was away as a labourer. 578
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When I came to Guilherme's house a lengthy wrangle was going on from which I select some themes. Guilherme denied that he had planned to burn the catechetical school, the anthropologist's house, and his own house. (These charges were almost certainly invented.) 578

Paulo said that he had baptized a dying son of Guilherme, who, despite this, had not shown him any respect. He also denied that he had committed adultery with Guilherme's wife. (This would in any case be most unlikely owing to Paulo's blindness, resulting from an eye disease.)

Sapapula declared angrily: 'I gave Guilherme land here but

³ This accusation was regarded simply as the product of fear and nothing more was heard of it.

⁴ He used the word applied to chiefs of Gumba and other sub-chiefdom.

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578 Guilherme isn't grateful'—(then to Guilherme) 'I did no harm, I gave you everything, and you beat me.' This arguing eventually died down.

A little later another quarrel sprang up between Wasuka, and Kapapelo, Guilherme's mother's brother and witness. Wasuka declared that Kapapelo had committed adultery with his wife and must be killed. Kapapelo indignantly denied this.

The same day the catechist went to the mission to find the priest Antonio Pires to ask him to support the case against Guilherme. He returned to say that Padre Pires had been moved to the Bailundo Mission, but that he had been given a letter from the mission to the post setting out the case.

Guilherme in the evening came to my house to pay back the 200 escudos which I had paid to Simbwyikoka for the bride-wealth given for Anna. He had raised the 200 escudos from Paulo (his cross-cousin) and from Bartolomeu (his 'brother'), both of whom were under arrest (although free to walk about the village) through Guilherme's actions.

The following day (27th January) the policeman moved off with Guilherme and the others, Bartolomeu, Eugenio, Epalata, Wasuka, Kuseka, Kasosi, Paulo, Pedro Chiquete Santos (the catechist) and Sapapula.

[262] About noon the next day I found that Paulo and the catechist had returned to Epalanga and heard from them what had happened. On the way Guilherme had declared that his violent temper was to blame in having so many people arrested, apologized, and promised to go to another village. He pulled out a knife and threatened to commit suicide if this proposal was not accepted. This appeal was directed mainly to the catechist, and was reinforced by Guilherme's wife, who also threatened suicide and appealed to the catechist's feelings by pointing out that she had had two of her children baptized. This was accepted, and accordingly all turned back to the village except for Guilherme, Bartolomeu, his son Eugenio, and Wasuka's son Kuseka. Eugenio and Kuseka had been arrested [642] for not paying taxes, a matter of more interest to the *chefs* than the village brawl for which the others had been arrested. Eugenio and Kuseka were considered by the *chefs* not to be yet old enough for payment of tax, and Guilherme produced some

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story to explain the non-appearance of the others which satisfied *the chefs*. 578

The catechist was somewhat criticized for not having pushed on with the case, and thereby perhaps getting Guilherme landed in jail. Guilherme did move out of the village in February and settled near the outskirts of the Protestant village of Kalungwengwe. Kapapelo also set about moving out of Epalanga. 627

In the conflict which has just been described, there are three disputes, the question of the bridewealth which involved Luciano, Simbwyikoka, Guilherme, and the anthropologist, the quarrel between Paulo and Guilherme, and the subsequent uprising against Guilherme which takes its signal from Paulo's reference of the dispute to the priest. 578

The question of bridewealth repayment is subordinate to, indeed enclosed within, the main dispute. It does illustrate one point central to the problem of Umbundu social control, the absence of any court machinery. Jeremias and Luciano had tried to recover it by appealing to the priest; later Luciano and Simbwyikoka attempted to get it back by coming and demanding it, that is by self-help. Another extremely significant aspect of the social structure is revealed by this 'enclosed' case. Guilherme after a bitter dispute with Paulo which has ended in the arrest of Paulo and Bartolomeu borrows 200 escudos from them as a kinsman. This indicates that kinship ties can survive and function despite a quarrel which they do not check or prevent, a point which will be developed later in an examination of how kinship affects and is affected by a dispute. 578 602

The conflict cannot be viewed as simply a dispute between individuals, nor as a dispute between the holders of opposed roles. Guilherme was generally regarded as lacking 'sense' (*olondunge*), the quality, greatly admired by the Ovimbundu, of good judgement and decent social behaviour, and he confessed himself to be at fault. Yet he could not have acted in the way he did unless he had been a government headman, nor would the uprising against him have taken the form it did had he not held an office dependent on the post. There is, however, no necessary conflict between a government headman and the catechist or 578 571 572

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571 elder of the school in the sense that there is no sphere where their duties overlap and where they must compete.

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622 The roles of government headmen and of officials of the school are complementary. It is through the chief and the government headman that the Ovimbundu pay their taxes and fines, are recruited as contract labourers and are called to road service, are arrested for crimes and misdemeanours and are entered on official records. It is through the catechists and elders of the school that the Ovimbundu find the expression of village unity by which at the same time they are linked to the whites and to the rest of the world on the religious level. The missions bring the Ovimbundu closer to the whites than does the administration, without the administration's predominant interest in making demands.⁵

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797 While at the level of the total Angolan political system the administration is more powerful than the missions, the position of the catechist or elder of the school is stronger at the local level because the catechist and the elder represent the catechetical school which is the only social grouping existing on a village basis, whereas the government headman in fact represents no social group but is simply an executant of the orders of the *chefe*. Hence the catechist owing to this representative role and to his contact with the mission (which is much closer than that of the government headman) can lead the people and invoke the aid of the mission against abuses on the part of chiefs or government headmen. This would not be the case if the post gave firm backing to its local agents and turned a deaf ear to communications from the missions. Opposition to an overbearing government headman is then likely to be led by the leaders of the 'school', who can count on the backing of the mission, if they have a good case, to intervene for them at the post. The relative importance in a village of the catechist and elder of the school varies according to such factors as personality. The way in which the catechist was ignored when he tried to intervene in the dispute over the bridewealth shows that the catechist cannot claim authority in disputes as a matter of course.

⁵ The missions impose fines and a yearly levy on their adherents which are small compared to the official taxes.

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627 servants in Portugal and Angola;* sociologically it reflects the
 648 lack of any system of bureaucratic administration at the local
 571 level and the isolation of the *chefs* from the people. The uncertainties of taking a case to the post are such that it is thought desirable to have some backing (such as the letter the catechist got from the mission) from a representative of the 'civilized' community and in the absence of any other 'civilized' person the mission becomes the patron of all natives, whatever their religious allegiance.

578 The importance of this case, then, is its illustration of what
 627 may happen in a conflict between a catechist or elder of the
 571 school and a government headman. The limited nature of their powers, and the fact that their roles are not competitive, make a conflict between them, so long as it is not extended to pull in other people, necessarily confined to indirect attacks. If either party wishes to bring down the other he must appeal to the post or to the mission. The government headman can pull people in by accusing them at the post of not paying taxes or creating a disturbance, or by recommending them for contract labour. His position is not so strong as his dependence on the post might suggest, since the intervention of the mission, at the request of the villagers, can bring him down.

Within this main 'political' dispute is the quarrel over bridewealth, which is illuminating both in indicating the absence of legal mechanisms at the village level, and in showing how kinship ties continue to function at the height of a bitter quarrel. Both these points will be noticed again in the accounts of later disputes.

3. *Kapapelo and Sapapula*

- 578 The next case involved Sapapula and Kapapelo and was
 627 again to end in an averted appeal to the *chefs de poste*. On the 21st of February Sapapula, Sahuke (see List II, p. 56), Waruka, Luanga (21), and others went from Epalanga to the house of Justino, who had called them there to settle a dispute. Justino

* An inhabitant of Lisbon, wishing to emigrate to Canada, won the maid of a former official of the British Embassy. Discovering that this would get him nowhere, he transferred his affections to the maid of one of the staff of the American Embassy. The implications are interesting.

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was a man of fifty or more, who lived in Portuguese style making money from coffee and other crops. He claimed to be an *assimilado* (African with the status of a Portuguese citizen) but in actual fact he was not one. He had employed a man called Kusumula, who lived in Epalanga and was the brother of Kapapelo's wife. 578 627

To appreciate the point of Justino's complaint, it is necessary to explain the significance of certain terms indicative of ethnic and social status. Otjimbundu is the singular of Ovimbundu, a people defined by the use of the Umbundu language. It is also used to refer to any black person (thus I was often asked whether there were Ovimbundu [i.e. Africans] in England), and is therefore equivalent to the Portuguese *preto* (black), which when used of a person has a rather pejorative sense like 'native' in other parts of Africa. Livingstone, writing a hundred years ago, remarks of one area in Angola; 'The people under him (the chief) are divided into a number of classes. . . . They are also divided into gentlemen and little gentlemen, and, though quite black, speak of themselves as white men and of the others, who may not wear shoes, as "blacks".' Justino's complaint was that Sapapula had referred to him as a *preto qualquer* or in Umbundu (Sapapula did not speak Portuguese), *otjimbundu tjango*, a mere black. 579 627

Justino delivered a speech when the people from Epalanga had settled on the veranda of his house in which he declared with much force that he was not an Otjimbundu 'Ame otjimbundu.' This accusation was based on information given him by Kusumula, who alleged that Sapapula had said to government headmen that Kusumula could be recruited for road work, as he worked not for a white (a term applied also to *assimilados*) but for a mere black. 580 627

I give the main lines of the ensuing argument. Sapapula denied that he had called Justino a black. Kusumula claimed that Sapapula was always picking on him. Sapapula declared that he had founded the village, and that Kusumula wanted to break it up. Kapapelo said that he had at one time given medicine to a girl and Sapapula had told Jaime to kill him because he might have seduced her. Kutenga Louase, the chief

¹ Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches*, p. 411.

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- 58 of Gumba who had also turned up, intervened and denounced
627 Kusumula for not wishing to work for the post, and then brought the case back to Sapapula's alleged slander of Justino. The latter intervened again here to say that he had been slandered. Sapapula, by now very excited, denied this and said that Kusumula and Kapapelo wanted to break up the village. This was followed by three people trying to talk at once. Justino strolled round to the back of his house. Sapapula and Kapapelo wrangled.

Justino was not the only person to find this tedious. Paulo suggested that we should go. Kapapelo complained that Saviel, a sister's son of Sapapula, had made advances to his wife. Sapapula continued to declare that Kapapelo must not break up the village. Kutenga Luase criticized Kapapelo for not working for the post. Gonçalves (18) intervened to refer back to the visit of the priest, Antonio Fries, and said that he had left with the words (i.e. he had come to a decision). Gonçalves was a pagan. The wrangling continued until Justino returned, told Sapapula not to insult him again and not to be angry with Kusumula. Sapapula said that Kusumula had left the village (Epalanga) and so would not be needed for the post again (that is, Sapapula would not be any longer responsible for him), and that he had never been angry with Kapapelo. Nahoka, Sapapula's wife, said that Kapapelo was not *akimfela* 'a man of the country'. Justino then dismissed the gathering, telling Sapapula to buy a bottle of wine for the elders who had come with him.

Kapapelo and Kusumula were not connected with the post as Guilherme was, nor with the mission as Paulo was. Kusumula was the employee of Justino and had thus an opportunity to appeal to him by accusing Sapapula of denying his status. It is not particularly significant whether Sapapula had actually said this or not. The accusation is important since it is a reflection of a common Umbundu way of attacking one's enemies, by accusing them of some offence against a 'civilized' person. Thus, to refer back to the earlier dispute between Paulo and Guilherme, the latter found it necessary to deny that he had planned to set fire to the catechetical school and the anthropologist's house, charges which were intended to weigh heavily with the chief. Hence, when a quarrel between natives comes to a civilized

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person, it is likely that the details will be re-organized to gain his attention and support. 578
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It is also notable that Sapapula was ready to accept Justino's right to hold a case on the matter. The acceptance and even readiness (as appears later) on Sapapula's part that Justino should hear cases is partly again a result of the lack of any legal machinery on the village level, partly an aspect of the 'patron-client' situation which has so often marked 'civilized'-native relations in Angola. No doubt much in Justino's behaviour arose from the taste he showed at times for settling cases, which led to a certain number of local cases being referred to him, and his readiness to settle them may not have been particularly common among *assimilados*. 127

Much of the actual case consisted of accusations and counter-accusations between Sapapula and Kapapelo with other people intervening. There is a kind of attempt to establish a balance of wrongs, Kusumula claiming that Sapapula was always picking on him when there was a call for labour from the post, Kapapelo accusing Sapapula of inciting Jaime to kill him and Sapapula's sister's son Saviel of planning to seduce his wife. Sapapula had accused Kusumula and Kapapelo of trying to break the village. Lusase intervened rather against Kusumula and Kapapelo, who was his 'brother'. As previously, the demands of the post for labour are regarded as being used by their local executants in a discriminating way. 578
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On the evening of the same day, as I was calling round the village, I found Kapapelo at the door of Sapapula's kitchen. Apparently he had arrived drunk and had threatened to kill himself. Sapapula was greatly enraged at this, as were his women folk, Nahoka, his wife, Wumba, his daughter, and Nayangu, his 'sister', who vigorously abused Kapapelo. They warned Sapapula not to accept food from Kapapelo, lest the latter use it as a means of sorcery. Kapapelo complained that Nahoka had called him a slave thus expanding the hint contained in her previous enigmatic remark that Kapapelo was not a man of the country. 578
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On the next day, Wednesday the 22nd, Sapapula had intended to go again to Justino's to settle his case with Kapapelo, but there was a funeral to which a large number of people went. 127

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627 to the post. Somebody said to me 'Lusase wants a fine to be paid so that he can get something from it' (the chief traditionally having a right to commission on a fine paid in a dispute which he had settled). Eventually the dispute did not go to the post, as Kapapelo paid a fine, and the matter dropped.

[68] A great deal of detail has been given here, but it can be shown that consistencies can be extracted from what seems complete confusion.

578 Kapapelo had, no doubt, as was said, under the influence of drink, decided to carry on his conflict with Sapapula after the gathering at Justino's and had arrived at Sapapula's threatening to commit suicide. The threat of suicide was here used as Guilherme had used it to put an opponent in a difficult position, but it infuriated Sapapula, who decided that he must try and get another hearing. He therefore turned again to

[762] 627 Justino, although the latter had previously decided against him; thus implying that even a possibly unfavourable judge is acceptable, rather than let a squabble continue indefinitely.

Eventually, owing to Justino's refusal to hear the case, what I have called a 'moot' was got together, a body which lacked any deciding, dominating figure; but represented the local community. This became concerned with the question of the

578 relation of Kapapelo and Sapapula as affected by the action of Kapapelo in respect of Sapapula's wife Nahoka. As has been mentioned in the chapter on marriage, the relation between a

[837] man and his wife's lover is one of mystically manifested hostility. Sapapula by accusing Kapapelo of desiring to seduce his wife was indicating a very serious state of hostility between the two men; and one can only explain Kapapelo's confession to something of which he was not guilty as a mark of his hostility to Sapapula. Kapapelo was accused by Sapapula of attempting to do him a grievous wrong, and Kapapelo claimed that he had in fact done this wrong. Nahoka denied that she had wronged her husband, and produced evidence of her assertion. Before considering her arguments, it must be noted what were the interests of the other people involved in the case.

627 It might be suggested that Kafelo, Lusase, and Ngombe had to some extent the function of judges or at least arbitrators, and Sapapula had indeed invited Ngombe to give his opinion (1

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do not know how Kafelo and Lusase came to hear of the case). 627
 In practice, their role was that of any other spectator in trying to bring about a settlement, although a chief has, as was noted, the right to a commission on any indemnification. The right of spectators to intervene is not based on any particular relationship to those involved nor on any reputation for wisdom. There is in fact no organized routine for determining who may and who must turn up and who may and who must speak. Spectators and speakers are simply members of the neighbourhood community, some related to Sapapula, some simply fellow-villagers, and it is natural that in present Umbundu society, lacking clearly-defined social groups, the crowd that assembles on such an occasion should look like a chance gathering. Its lack of recognized procedure, of accepted leadership, and of specific criteria of recruitment are all typical of the neighbourhood community among the contemporary Ovimbundu. 577

Despite the 'unorganized' character of this gathering, there exists evidently a set of generally accepted symbolic values, which are accepted by Christian and pagan, by young and old. Thus Nahoka claimed as evidence that she had not committed adultery her meal with Kapapelo's wife, and the latter in turn offered as evidence that adultery had been committed a statement that her husband had made a gift of soap to Nahoka. These actions provide presumptive evidence of innocence or guilt since an adulterer or adulteress may not eat under apparently mystical sanctions with the spouse of the person with whom he or she has committed adultery, and the giving of gifts by a man to a woman implies a sexual relationship. These actions were presumably recognized as convincing evidence in the days when there existed a formal court system, and continue to be recognized as such at the present day. 578

The nature of contemporary social relations, as being the end-product of a series of acts between individuals rather than as the content of jural norms defined by status, is also revealed in the dispute, particularly in the episode at Justino's. Sapapula does not complain that Kapapelo had not behaved as a villager should to his headman, but that he had not been grateful for having been given land. Kapapelo's complaint that Savio, Sapapula's sister's son, had attempted to seduce his wife was, 579

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578 like his accusation that Sapapula had incited Jaime to kill
 571 him, an attempt to portray himself not as an ungrateful
 recipient of Sapapula's goodness but a much suffering victim
 of his malevolence.

627 Although the moot reflects the existing social structure and
 179 values there are occasional reminiscences of the former social
 system. Thus Ngombe seems to have been acting according to a
 traditional but non-effective pattern in giving a long, judicial,
 summing up, which had no practical effect. Again, when
 Sapapula accused Kapapelo of wishing to break up the village
 it is probable that he was thinking of the old villages socially
 defined by the agnatic tie and physically enclosed by a stockade
 rather than the physically and socially amorphous villages of the
 present day. Values such as these survive in the minds of
 individuals when the associated social forms have disintegrated.
 They are brought out on occasions analogous to those in which
 they were formerly used, but are not nowadays decisive in the
 way they would have been.

627 The quarrel between Kapapelo and Sapapula is different
 from the other cases, since the meeting held to discuss it is held
 without the presence of a 'civilized' person and it pivots about a
 question of adultery or rather attempted adultery, a subject
 which has hitherto appeared marginally as a subject for
 insults. The case is held without the presence of a 'civilized'
 person, and this is from necessity, not from choice. Sapapula
 had tried to have the case heard by Justino, and Kapapelo
 was eventually brought to terms by Sapapula's threat to refer
 the matter to the post. While the moot shows us the community
 acting to uphold social control, such action is regarded as an
 unsatisfactory substitute for a decision by somebody who could,
 as Gonçalves said of Antonio Pires, 'leave with the words', that
 is, settle the case.

578 Adultery has previously occurred as an accusation thrown in
 237 during a squabble that has begun with something else. Thus
 Guilherme accused Paulo and Wauka accused Kapapelo of
 adultery because they were angry with them; they were not
 angry with them because they thought they had committed
 adultery with their wives. It is parallel to the suggestions that
 Kapapelo was a sorcerer, an insult not an accusation. It now

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occurs, whether in intention as declared by Sapapula and Nahoka, as accomplished as claimed by Kapapelo, as the substance of the conflict between the two men. 578
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To sum up, Kapapelo had originally been aligned with his kinsman Guilherme against Sapapula, who had then shown hostility to Kapapelo, and especially to his wife's brother Kusumula. The latter had counter-attacked by accusing Sapapula before Justino, and there the matter might have rested if Kapapelo had not tried to attack Sapapula again, by making the threat to commit suicide at his kitchen door. This led to the moot at which the charge of attempted adultery was made, and at which Sapapula intended to, and succeeded in, taming Kapapelo. 578
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4. Lusase, Sapapula, and Luanga

In this case, individuals previously met, notably Sapapula, and Lusase reappear, this time as enemies. The principal scenes are first an attempt by a kinsman of Lusase's to recover a debt from Sapapula, secondly an attack by Lusase on Sapapula, thirdly a decision by the *chef de poste* in favour of Sapapula, fourthly a fresh complaint to the post by Luanga against Lusase, fifthly a post decision in favour of Luanga, sixthly and finally reconciliation of Luanga and Lusase.

This chain of disputes had begun actually before the episodes mentioned in the last case. On the 19th February, Ndonga a kinsman of Lusase (whom he had helped to power), arrived in Epalanga and tied up Sapapula, as a result of the latter not paying a debt. I produced the money and for the present no more was heard of it. Lusase said that he did not know what went on in the villages, when the matter was mentioned to him.

On 13th May, Simbwyikoka, a former chief whose village was near Sapapula's, was holding a ceremony in which a bull had been killed. Sapapula had taken part in the ceremony and had been responsible for sending a leg of the bull (the chief's traditional prerogative) not to Lusase but to Kafelo, who, although he had been deposed in 1954, had the advantage over Lusase of having passed through the royal rituals, and 578
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578 having been elected according to traditional rules. Lusase
631 was angry at this, turned up at the ceremony, and attacked Sapapula.

627 The following morning Epalanga buzzed with indignation. Gregorio, the chief of Menga, and Mandumba, Sapapula's son, had arrived at Epalanga to express their support, and Gregorio asked me⁹ to write a letter to the Mission to get its support against Lusase at the post. I said that I would go to the chief's village to persuade Lusase to seek a reconciliation. The elder Wasuka, a cross-cousin of Sapapula, declared that even if Lusase offered five cattle in compensation they would not be accepted, and Sapapula's supporters portrayed him as a much injured man, repeatedly the victim of the Guilherme, Kapapelo, Lusase, Ndonga clique. My offer to go to the chief's village fell through when we heard that Lusase was now no longer there, but near, apparently at Simbwyikoka's.

I suggested that the moot should be held at Simbwyikoka's since the case had begun there; the others said 'No, let him come over here.' The crowd settled down in the open space before my house. News was then brought to us that Lusase refused to come over and insisted on the people coming to him, declaring that he ruled all, and did not obey the anthropologist but only the *chefe*. Accordingly everybody got up and walked over to Simbwyikoka's. Here we learnt that Lusase had fled. Kambungo¹⁰, an elder of Menga and kinsmen of Sapapula, declared that somebody who behaved like this could not be chief. Gregorio the chief of Menga became involved in an argument with Ndonga, who he said was responsible for installing Lusase. This Ndonga denied. This, incidentally, [134] was the first time that I had heard that Lusase was not properly elected. As previously noted on the fall of Kafelo, Lusase had arrived at the post and announced himself as being the new chief. The Gumba people did not protest about this for fear of possible reactions from the post.

It now became known that Lusase could not be found.

[123] ⁹ It may be suggested that my interventions were not in accordance with anthropological etiquette. It is difficult to see what else I could have done; it is, after all, the local custom for 'civilised' persons to provide letters of recommendation, and a refusal on my part would not have been understood.

¹⁰ He has been mentioned in Chapter V.

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People said that he had fled to the house of his sister's son 627
Guilherme en route for the post; Gregorio now said to me that
Lusase had made advances to Nahoka, trying to seduce her by
saying that Sapapula was old.

On the same day Sapapula left for the post with, as his 648
witnesses, Nahoka and Wasuka carrying a letter of recommend-
ation from me. At the post the *chefe* took his part and told
Lusase 'Sapapula is your father' and made Lusase kneel down
to seek pardon. Sapapula said that he wished to move across
the river into Menga, where he had formerly lived. The *chefe*
told him to stay at Epalanga (because of the anthropologist's
presence there), but transferred Epalanga administratively 631
from Gumba to Chicunda. This settlement pleased the Epal-
anga people. It may be added that had Sapapula actually
crossed over, a number of householders, including Paulo, would
not have followed him.

Despite the *chefe's* acts it was not certain whether the change
was to be given effect immediately or only after the *chefe's*
annual visit; hence some more wrangling took place over the
question of where Epalanga was situated for such purposes as
the payment of fines for rum-brewing.

Luanga, who shared with Sapapula the title of Epalanga, 528
came to my house on the night of the 27th June to ask for a 631
letter to the *chefe de posto*. He told me that Lusase wanted to 648
take away his title of Epalanga and send him to contract (non-
voluntary) labour. I suggested that we should go together to
see Lusase at his village on the following day. The next morning
he decided not to go to the chief but to go straight to the post
with his wife Adriana. He told me that when Lusase became
chief in 1954, he and his 'brother' Mwehombo had bought the
title of Epalanga (held under Kafelo by Sapapula) which they 634
held jointly. Luanga had paid for this two pigs equal to 1,000
escudos (about £12. 10s. in British currency) and other things
as well. Luanga's motive was not political power (which the
present-day chief lacks and of which his ministers have even
less) nor prestige, but because he would thus be exempt from
contract labour. Luanga said that he did not mind going to
contract labour, but insisted on having back what he had paid
to Lusase. I said I would write a letter to say that he should not

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648 go to contract labour and accordingly he left for the post with my letter.

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631 Luanga returned quite satisfied a few days later, the *chefe* having decided in his favour. Two days later he went to the chief's village to complain of Lusase's actions. With him came Bartolomeu and Paulo. Ngombe, as Mwekalia, and thereby responsible for the relations between chief and people, acted as the presiding figure, more chairman than judge, although he spoke for some time on the case. Lusase defended himself by saying that it was not he but somebody else who had recommended Luanga for contract labour. This explanation was accepted by Luanga. Bartolomeu and Paulo received small sums of money from Lusase for acting as witnesses, and later Luanga left with Lusase for another village. Here they effected the succession of a man to his father's title of Mbesi (another ministerial position). Luanga was much pleased with his share of the fee.

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648 Not only the personalities but many of the features of previous cases reappear here. Of the ways of acting which people choose, Ndonga and Lusase use self-help, Ndonga to recover a debt, and Lusase to uphold his prestige. Against Lusase, as against Kapapelo, a moot was formed. Lusase like Guilherme insisted on his responsibility to the post alone, when the opposition seemed to be using a 'civilized' person of a different category. Final decisions are obtained by appeals to the post but the risky nature of such procedures is shown by the desire to get a letter of recommendation. Luanga believed that Lusase had got him sent to contract labour just as Francisco believed (correctly) that Guilherme had got him recruited. Ngombe as Mwekalia is more successful here as arbitrator than in the moot at Kapapelo's. Finally we see the contrast again between the survival of formal recognition in symbol of the prestige of chieftancy (the episode of the bull's leg) and its actual impotence caught between *chefe* and people. The specific issue in this dispute turns on a conflict between a chief and his people, and it shows how a chief can be defeated in the same way that the first dispute showed a government headman being defeated.

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648 Lusase's opponents had, as previously, other means of influencing the post. Gregorio had proposed getting a letter from the

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mission to give Sapapula's case, and, as things worked out, it was the anthropologist who was made the 'civilized' focus for the opposition to Lusase as Antonio Pires had been made the focus of the opposition to Guilherme. Lusase, like Guilherme, reacted by saying that he owed allegiance only to the *chefe de posto*, and running off to the post. 127
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Luanga's case shows how desire to get out of contract labour may give a new reason for taking a ministerial title, and also once again how sending someone to contract labour is regarded as a means of injuring those whom one dislikes. [637]

I have spoken of the conflict between Lusase and Sapapula as being a conflict between a chief and his people, and this is true in so far as it shows how opposition forms against a chief and how he can be checked. It is therefore of importance as indicating the position of the chief in the contemporary social system. The people themselves interpreted the dispute as being essentially one between individuals—Lusase's behaviour was attributed to his lust for Nahoka, and Gregorio entered the dispute not as the ruler of the neighbouring chiefdom of Menga but as a friend of Sapapula. The interpretation of what is a political conflict as a quarrel between individuals may be explained as being due to the relatively limited nature of the role of chief (Lusase) and of traditional headman (Sapapula) which therefore do not predominate in the social status of the individual. (In this particular case, had I got Lusase's viewpoint he would probably have said that he was defending his dignity as chief, whereas Sapapula did not regard Lusase as being really chief.) The lack of a formal court system or even of an articulated political system at the local level has brought into desuetude the old legal and political idioms and the Ovimbundu have not yet learnt new terms from the Portuguese. 578
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5. Social Control and Social Structure in the Dispute

I now return to the points mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. It is hardly necessary to underline the decayed state of the traditional system of authority. Lusase had, at the time of the quarrel between Guilherme and Paulo, expressed his 178
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627 than the catechists and 'elders of the school'; yet the weakness
 648 of the agents of the post before a local opposition led, not by
 297 such traditional figures as Kafelo and Sapapula, but by the
 school functionaries, has been demonstrated. The post accepts
 intervention by the mission in supporting disputants, and the
 mission is ready to help not only its disputants but any native
 who has a strong case—that is, it has a generalized relation of
 patronage to all natives.¹² Hence, since in a serious dispute
 people look round for a 'civilized' patron, the mission is the
 one most likely to be appealed to, and these appeals usually go
 through its local agents.

140 While the symbiosis of two societies, one ruling, the other
 571 ruled, is a common feature of modern Africa, the extremely
 limited nature of the role delegated by the administration to
 the native authority, the 'patron-client' tie linking 'civilized'
 persons to the natives, and the opportunity given to patrons to
 intervene in cases before the *chefs*, seem to be distinctive features
 of Portuguese colonization.¹³

578 The third aspect of the social structure mentioned in the
 602 introductory section was the role in disputes of kinship ties. It
 has been earlier noted that Sapapula's supporters regarded him
 as a victim of a concerted alliance by Guilherme, Kapapelo,
 Lusase, and Ndonga. In fact Lusase had avoided getting
 involved in the dispute between Guilherme and Paulo, had
 supported Sapapula against Kapapelo, and had disclaimed
 responsibility for Ndonga's act. The present social structure is
 not one in which groups of kin habitually co-operate;¹⁴ and it is
 possible that this belief in a coalition against Sapapula reflects
 memories of the old social structure.

Kinship ties between individuals seem neither to restrain
 them from quarrelling nor to be liable to permanent disruption
 as a result of quarrels. By August 1956 Kasoi was once again

¹² It is felt in administrative circles that the advancement of the African is mainly the responsibility of the missions.

¹³ Anybody who knows the Portuguese well will acknowledge the importance given to personal influence (*maqui*) and the lack of concern for bureaucratic (in the Weberian sense) procedures.

¹⁴ See Chapters IV and VII for details on the kinship code and on general aspects of kinship. The support which Sapapula received was not confined to his own kinship core—thus Gregorio who enthusiastically supported Sapapula was not even a kinsman.

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on good terms with Guilherme, who was a 'father' of his, and even earlier in June part of the celebrations which marked the marriage of Paulo's son Jose to Pungu, a girl from Namba, whose mother had at one time been married to Kapapelo, took place at the latter's house. Most strikingly of all, as has been noted, Guilherme could borrow money from Bartolomeu and Paulo at the height of their quarrel. The kinship bond exists outside of and, it might be said, at a deeper level than, the quarrel, and the rebukes hurled at an adversary reflect this. Paulo did not complain that Guilherme was a bad cross-cousin; instead he complained that Guilherme was not grateful to him for having baptized his dying child. The motive for co-operation or conflict in everyday life is to be found not in the tracing of genealogies but in the tally of reciprocal services and grievances between two individuals.

It may be claimed that this portrait of the kinship system which emerges from the disputes as being loosely structured and lacking defined obligations, but providing an underlying continuity, is very similar to that given in Chapter VII, which was based on questioning and the observation of everyday life.

The significance of the conjugal bond appears both positively in the way Luanga and Sapapula both take their wives to the post as witnesses, and negatively in the way the hostility of Kapapelo and Lusase to Sapapula is interpreted as being inspired by lust for his wife. Even the accusations of adultery so readily hurled about in disputes reflect the stereotype of the adulterer as the arch-enemy, and likewise the arch-enemy of the moment as at least a potential adulterer.

One question remains to be answered. Was Epalanga particularly rebellious, squabbling, divided, village, because of the presence of an unusual number of aggressive individuals? It is not possible to estimate the number of disputes per village, and the disputes which have been described were the most important of which I had personal knowledge. They were touched off by personal antagonisms rather than by structural contradictions. Yet they tie in with what has been said of the Umbundu social structure in earlier chapters to such a degree that they seem to reflect the lines along which any case of the sort would proceed. The weakness of the chiefs, stripped of

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578 traditional sanctions and lacking official confidences, the power-
626 less prestige of the traditional headman, the lack of defined
178 village unity, the role of the catechetical school and its officials,
who have come to represent the village as a whole, the loosely
structured yet stabilizing kinship system, all described in earlier
chapters, have re-emerged as parts of a reasonably effective
system of social control within which people quarrel and by
which their quarrels are settled. It is possible for the villagers by
appealing to patrons to check tyrannical behaviour on the part
of chief and headmen and to get a fair hearing at the post.
Within the local community disputants, once their anger has
blown over, may be reunited by the ties of kinship and affinity.